

A Taste of the Orient
August 31, 2021
Jennifer Lien, Soprano
Gwendolyn Mok Piano
Omri Shimron, Piano

Program

Chinoiserie
Serenade of the Doll
from *Children's Corner*

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)
Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Jennifer Lien, Soprano
Gwendolyn Mok, Piano

A un Jeune Gentilhomme, Ode Chinoise, Op. 12 No. 1
Réponse d'une épouse sage, Op. 35 No. 2
Favorite Abandonnée, Op. 47 No. 1
Vois! de belle filles, Op 47 No. 2

Albert Roussel (1869–1937)

Jennifer Lien, Soprano
Gwendolyn Mok, Piano

Pagodes
from *Estampes*
The Empress and the Nightingale
from *Ma Mere l'Oye*

Claude Debussy

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Omri Shimron, Piano
Gwendolyn Mok, Piano

Trois Poésies de la lyrique Japonaise
Akahito
Mazatsumi
Tsaraiuki

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Jennifer Lien, Soprano
Gwendolyn Mok, Piano

Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut
from *Images*, Book 2

Claude Debussy

Gwendolyn Mok, Piano

Quatre poèmes hindous
I. Madras: Une Belle
II. Lahore: Un Sapin isolé
III. Bénares: Naissance de Bouddha
IV. Jeypur: Si vous pensez

Maurice Delage (1879–1961)

Jennifer Lien, Soprano; Gwendolyn Mok, Piano

Texts and Translations

Manuel de Falla: Chinoiserie (from Trois Mélodies; 1909; text by Théophile Gautier)

It is not you, madam, that I like.
Nor you, Juliette,
nor you, Ophelia,
nor Beatrice.
Not even blonde Laura, with those big, soft eyes.

The one that I love right now is in China.
She lives with her aging parents,
In a tower of fine porcelain.
By the Yellow River, where there are cormorants.

She with her eyes turned upward,
A foot tiny enough to hold in one's hand,
A complexion brighter than a copper lamp,
With nails, long and carmine red.

Through the window, she looks out,
So the swallow, in flight, might brush by,
And each night,
As beautifully as a poet,
She sings of the willow and peach blossoms.

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Albert Roussel: A un Jeune Gentilhomme, Ode Chinoise (Op. 12 No. 1; 1908; text by H.P. Roché after the poem by Herbert Giles)

Do not enter, Sir, please,
Don't break my ferns,
Not that it would upset me much,
But what would my father and my mother say?
And even if I love you,
I dare not think what would happen.

Don't pass by my wall, Sir, please,
Don't destroy my primroses,
Not that it would upset me much,
But, my God! what would my brothers say?
And even if I love you,
I dare not think what would happen.

Stay outside, Sir, please,
Don't push my screen,
Not that it would upset me much,
But, my God! what would people say?
And even if I love you,
I dare not think what would happen.

Albert Roussel: Réponse d'une épouse sage (Op. 35 No. 2; 1927; text by H.P. Roché, after the poem by Chang-Chi/Zhang Ji translated into English by Herbert Giles)

Knowing, my lord, my status as wife,
You sent me two precious pearls,
And I, comprehending your love,
Placed them coldly on the silk of my dress.

For my house is of high lineage,
My husband is captain of the royal guard.
And a man like you should say:
"The ties of marriage are not to be defiled."

With the two pearls,
I send you two tears,
Two tears
for not having known you earlier.

Albert Roussel: Favorite Abandonnée (Op. 47 No. 1; 1932; text by H.P. Roché, after the poem by Li-I/Li Yi translated into English by Herbert Giles)

Under the moon the palace resounds
To the sound of lutes and songs.
It seems to me someone has filled
The clepsydra with all the sea-water
So that this long night
Never finishes for me.

Albert Roussel: Vois! de belle filles (Op. 47 No. 2; 1932; text by H.P. Roché, after the poem by Huang Fu-Ian/Huang Furan translated into English by Herbert Giles)

Look! Beautiful girls run in groups
In the wide corridors
With music and gaiety born on the breeze.
Come! Tell me if she who will be chosen tonight
May have much longer eyelashes than these?

Igor Stravinsky: Trois Poésies de la lyrique Japonaise (1913; French texts by Maurice Delage, based on German translations of Japanese texts by Hans Bethge)

I. Akahito (poem by Yamabe no Akahito)

Let's go to the garden
I wanted to show you the white flowers
The snow falls
Are these flowers or white snow?

II. Mazatsumi (poem by Minamoto no Masazumi)

April comes.
Breaking the ice from their bark,
Leaping merrily in the pools of the foamy stream
They want to be the first white flowers
Of the joyful spring.

III. Tsaraiuki (poem by Ki no Tsurayuki)

What does one see, so white and fair?
One would say, clouds everywhere between the hills.
The cherry trees, blooming,
Celebrate the awaited arrival of spring.

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Maurice Delage: Quatre poèmes hindous (1912)

I. Madras: Une Belle (poem by Bhartrihari)

A beautiful woman with a slim waist
walks beneath the forest trees,
Resting from time to time.
Lifting with her hand
the three golden veils
that cover her breasts,
she reflects back to the moon
the rays in which she was bathed.

II. Lahore: Un Sapin isolé (poem by Heinrich Heine)

A lonely fir tree stands
on a barren northern mountain.
And drowzes.
Ice and snow envelop it
in a white blanket.

It dreams of a palm tree,
Far away in the distant Orient,
that grieves, solitary and silent
on a shining rocky wall.

Ah...

III. Bénâres: Naissance de Bouddha (Anonymous)

It was then that the coming of Buddha
was announced on earth.
The sky filled with a great clamour of clouds.
The gods, flourishing their fans and robes,
scattered innumerable marvellous flowers.
Mysterious and sweet perfume intermingled
like creepers in the warm breath of that spring night.
The divine pearl of the full moon
hung above the marble palace,
guarded by twenty thousand elephants,
like grey hills the colour of clouds.

IV. Jeypur: Si vous pensez (poem by Bhartrihari)

If you think of her,
you feel an aching torment.
If you see her,
your spirit is troubled.
If you touch her,
you lose your reason.
How can you call her beloved?

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